



United Way of Connecticut

1344 Silas Deane Highway, Rocky Hill, CT 06067 • Phone: (860) 571-7500 • Fax: (860) 571-7525

DOCKET FILE COPY ORIGINAL

CONNECTICUT UNITED WAYS

United Way of Branford
United Way of the Capital Area
Darien United Way & Community Council
United Community Services (New Britain)
United Way of Eastern Fairfield County
United Way of Greater New Haven
United Way of Greenwich
Housatonic-Shepaug United Way
United Way of Meriden & Wallingford
Middlesex United Way
United Way of Milford
United Way of Naugatuck & Beacon Falls
United Way of Central Naugatuck Valley
United Way of New Canaan
United Way of Northern Fairfield County
United Way of Northwest Connecticut
United Way of Norwalk & Wilton
United Way of Southeastern Connecticut
United Way of Southington
United Way of Stamford
United Way of the Torrington Area
Valley United Way
United Way of West Central Connecticut
United Way of Westport-Weston
Windham Region United Way

**STATEWIDE INITIATIVES
HELPING PEOPLE**

INFOLINE*

Connecticut's First Call for Help

State Employees' Campaign*

Public Sector Charitable Giving

* State of Connecticut Partnerships

United Way of Connecticut serves as the State Association for the 25 Connecticut United Ways

July 19, 1999

Ms. Magalie Salas
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

RECEIVED

JUL 20 1999

FCC MAIL ROOM

RE: Petition by the U.S. Department of Transportation for Assignment of an Abbreviated Dialing Code (N11) to Access Intelligent Transportation System Services (ITS) Nationwide,
File No. NSD-L-99-24; CC Docket No. 92-105

Dear Ms. Salas:

I enclose an original and five copies of the comments of United Way of Connecticut which manages and operates Connecticut's statewide 2-1-1/Infoline service. Please file the original and four copies and return a file-stamped copy to me in the enclosed, self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol MacElwee
President

enclosures

No. of Copies rec'd 0104
List A B C D E

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION**

**RECEIVED
JUL 20 1999**

FCC MAIL ROOM

**PETITION BY THE UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FOR ASSIGNMENT OF AN ABBREVIATED
DIALING CODE (N11) TO ACCESS
INTELLIGENT TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM
(ITS) SERVICES NATIONWIDE**

)
)
)
)
)
)

FILE NO. NSD-L-99-24

CC DOCKET NO. 92-105

INITIAL COMMENTS OF UNITED WAY OF CONNECTICUT

Pursuant to the April 20, 1999, notice of the Federal Communications Commission (Commission), United Way of Connecticut hereby files its Initial Comments with respect to the "Petition by the United States Department of Transportation (DOT) for Assignment of an Abbreviated Dialing Code (N11) to Access Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) Services Nationwide." United Way of Connecticut respectfully states as follows:

I.

On behalf of the 24 United Ways throughout the State of Connecticut, we oppose the specific assignment of 2-1-1 for the dissemination of travel-related information because 2-1-1 is currently in use as a statewide number for Connecticut residents to call for information about all public and private community services. This service is managed and operated by United Way of Connecticut. We currently receive approximately 200,000 calls per year. In addition, many other states are moving toward implementation of 2-1-1 as a community service linkage number based on serious need and grassroots support as well as its unqualified success here and in Metropolitan Atlanta. We oppose the assignment of another N-1-1 number for travel purposes if it makes the nationwide assignment of 2-1-1 for community service linkage purposes less likely.

Page two

Due to support from Governor Rowland and our state legislature, we were able to transform Connecticut's 23-year old Infoline service to the three-digit 2-1-1 telephone number earlier this year. The switch to a simpler number and accompanying marketing efforts resulted in a 47% jump in the number of calls for the spring months compared to the same period in 1998. The State of Connecticut has just spent \$920,000 to upgrade our technology, \$250,000 to market the new number, and added \$1.3 million to the operating budget of Infoline. These were new dollars, above and beyond the existing \$4 to 5 million dollar Infoline infrastructure. Now, the annual operating budget for 2-1-1 is over \$5 million with 90% from state and federal sources. This level of investment reflects how valuable the 2-1-1 service is for the State of Connecticut and how expensive and difficult it would be to lose the 2-1-1 number.

When a person calls 2-1-1 here, they receive "high-touch", personalized service from intensively trained, multi-lingual staff. This is augmented by "high-tech" ways for our staff to access comprehensive information about services, and enter data about the calls we receive for later analysis. Our staff does not just give out telephone numbers and addresses. They explain what is needed to actually receive specific services, i.e. documentation, eligibility, etc. Many are trained as regional specialists and/or experts in particular kinds of services such as Medicaid managed care or child care. Infoline is also accredited to counsel suicidal callers. This fact makes it a very unsuitable partner for sharing a three-digit number for traffic information through automated technology.

We urge the Federal Communications Commission not to assign 2-1-1 as a nationwide travel information number because of the expense and hardship it would cause Connecticut, its residents, and the United Way of Connecticut (operator and manager of 2-1-1) to change the Infoline number. We believe that it would be difficult to re-educate the public, after intensive marketing efforts for 2-1-1, to use another number for community service information and referral. We hope that the Commission will consider other numbers, perhaps even two-digit numbers that would be quicker for operators of motor vehicles to punch in, for travel-related purposes.

CONCLUSION

WHEREFORE, United Way of Connecticut respectfully requests that, if the Commission finds that the Department Of Transportation should be assigned an N11 number, that the Commission not assign 2-1-1 for use by ITS services. Furthermore, United Way of Connecticut urges that Commission action on DOT's Petition in no way delay or preclude Commission approval of the Request for Assignment of 2-1-1 to community resource information and referral services, as currently pending before the Commission in File No. NSD-L-98-80 (filed May 28, 1998).

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Carol MacElwee".

Carol MacElwee, President
United Way of Connecticut
1344 Silas Deane Highway
Rocky Hill, CT 06067
860/571-7500

July 19, 1999